

The preamble, as modified, was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, as modified, reads as follows:

S. RES. 19

Whereas Gerald Rudolph Ford, the 38th President of the United States, was born on July 14, 1913, in Omaha, Nebraska;

Whereas Gerald Ford was raised in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he was active in the Boy Scouts, achieving the Eagle Scout rank, and where he excelled as both a student and an athlete during high school;

Whereas after graduating from high school, Gerald Ford attended the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, where he played on the university's national championship football teams in 1932 and 1933, and was honored as the team's most valuable player in 1934, before graduating with a B.A. degree in 1935;

Whereas Gerald Ford later attended Yale Law School and earned an LL.B. degree in 1941, after which he began to practice law in Grand Rapids;

Whereas Gerald Ford joined the United States Naval Reserve in 1942 and served his country honorably during World War II;

Whereas upon returning from his service in the military, Gerald Ford ran for the United States House of Representatives and was elected to Congress;

Whereas Gerald Ford served in the House of Representatives from January 1949 to December 1973, winning reelection 12 times, each time with more than 60 percent of the vote;

Whereas Gerald Ford served with great distinction in Congress, in particular through his service on the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, of which he rose to become ranking member in 1961;

Whereas in addition to his work in the House of Representatives, Gerald Ford served as a member of the Warren Commission, which investigated the assassination of President John F. Kennedy;

Whereas, in 1965, Gerald Ford was selected as minority leader of the House of Representatives, a position he held for 8 years;

Whereas after the resignation of Vice President Spiro Agnew in 1973, Gerald Ford was chosen by President Richard Nixon to serve as Vice President of the United States;

Whereas following the resignation of President Nixon, Gerald Ford took the oath of office as President of the United States on August 9, 1974;

Whereas upon assuming the presidency, Gerald Ford helped the nation heal from one of the most difficult and contentious periods in United States history, and restored public confidence in the country's leaders;

Whereas Gerald Ford's basic human decency, his integrity, and his ability to work cooperatively with leaders of all political parties and ideologies, earned him the respect and admiration of Americans throughout the country;

Whereas the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007 recommended that America's next nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, designated as CVN-78, be named as the U.S.S. Gerald R. Ford, in honor of our 38th President; and

Whereas Gerald Ford was able to serve his country with such great distinction in large part because of the continuing support of his widely admired wife, Elizabeth (Betty), who also has contributed much to the nation in many ways, and of their 4 children, Michael, John, Steven, and Susan: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate notes with deep sorrow and solemn mourning the death of President Gerald Rudolph Ford.

*Resolved*, That the Senate extends its heartfelt sympathy to Mrs. Ford and the family of President Ford.

*Resolved*, That the Senate honors and, on behalf of the nation, expresses deep appreciation for President Ford's outstanding and important service to his country.

*Resolved*, That the Senate directs the Secretary of the Senate to communicate these resolutions to the House of Representatives and transmit a copy thereof to the family of the former President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators allowed to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I further ask unanimous consent that Senator SALAZAR be recognized for up to 5 minutes, followed by Senator ALLARD for up to 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. SALAZAR. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. SALAZAR and Mr. ALLARD pertaining to the introduction of S. 194 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine is recognized.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to proceed for 17 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, before the two Senators from Colorado leave the floor, let me just indicate that the legislation they introduced to honor former President Ford would be referred to the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, and as the ranking member of that committee, I wish to pledge my cooperation to them in moving this legislation. It is a fitting tribute.

Mr. ALLARD. I thank the Senator from Colorado. I appreciate all her fine work on that committee, and I really appreciate it for all the people of Colorado.

#### ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE ACT

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, last week, on the very first day of this new Congress, I joined with my colleague from Louisiana, Senator MARY LANDRIEU, in introducing the Access to Affordable Health Care Act. This is a comprehensive plan which builds on the strengths of our current public programs and private health care system to make affordable health care available to millions more Americans. It is similar to legislation we introduced in

the last Congress. I hope, given the urgency of dealing with the cost of health care and health insurance, that this will be the year this legislation moves forward.

One of my priorities in the Senate has long been to expand access to affordable health care. There are still far too many Americans without health insurance or with woefully inadequate coverage. As many as 46 million Americans are uninsured, and millions more are underinsured. The State of Maine is in the midst of a growing health insurance crisis, with insurance premiums rising at alarming rates. Whether I am talking to a self-employed fisherman, a displaced mill worker, the owner of a struggling small business, or the human resources manager of a large company, the soaring costs of health insurance are a common concern. These cost increases, double digit this past year, have been particularly burdensome for small businesses, the backbone of the Maine economy.

Maine's small business owners want to provide coverage for their employees, but they are caught in a cost squeeze. They know that if they pass on premium increases to their employees, more and more of them will decline coverage altogether because they simply can't afford their share. Yet these small businesses cannot continue to simply absorb the double-digit increases in their health insurance premiums year after year. The problem of rising costs is even more acute for individuals and families who must purchase health insurance on their own. Monthly health insurance premiums in my State often exceed a family's mortgage payment. Clearly, we must do more to make health insurance more available and more affordable.

The legislation Senator LANDRIEU and I are introducing is a seven-point plan that combines a variety of public and private approaches. The legislation's seven goals are, first, to expand access to affordable health care for small businesses; second, to make health insurance more affordable for individuals and families purchasing coverage on their own; third, to strengthen the health care safety net for those without coverage; fourth, to expand access to care in rural and underserved areas; fifth, to increase access to affordable long-term care, a major challenge as our population continues to age; sixth, to promote healthier lifestyles; and seventh, to provide more equitable Medicare payments to Maine providers to reduce the Medicare shortfall which has forced hospitals, physicians, and other health care providers to shift costs on to other payers in the form of higher charges, which, in turn, drives up the cost of health care premiums.

Let me discuss these points in greater detail.

First, expanding access for small businesses by helping small employers cope with rising health insurance costs. Since most Americans get their